

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 IO-13 HA-05 AID-05 PC-01 /100 W
-----067583 111156Z /43

R 101440Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7033
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0485

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEDR, PROP, BY, FR, US
SUBJ: LE RENOUVEAU CRITICIZES FRENCH ACTION IN CHAD AND US
COMMENT THEREON

SUMMARY: BURUNDI PRESS AGENCY DAILY NEWSPAPER
"LE RENOUVEAU DU BURUNDI" HAS ATTACKED FRENCH MILITARY
ACTION IN CHAD AND DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT
ON THAT SUBJECT. IT SAYS FRENCH ACTION COMPLICATES
SITUATION IN CHAD AND IS DICTATED BY FRENCH DESIRE
FOR CHAD MINERAL AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES. IT IMPLIES
U.S. EITHER CONCERTED ACTION WITH FRENCH OR HAD PRIOR
KNOWLEDGE. FRENCH AMBASSADOR IS PROTESTING INFORMALLY
TO LE RENOUVEAU AND PERHAPS TO FOREIGN MINISTER. WE
RECOMMEND U.S. TREAT LE RENOUVEAU COMMENT AS "DE MINIMIS"
AND IGNORE IT. END SUMMARY.

1. BUJUMBURA PRESS AGENCY DAILY NEWSPAPER "LE
RENOUVEAU DU BURUNDI" ISSUE NO. 19 MAY 6 CRITICIZED
FRENCH MILITARY ACTION IN CHAD AND DEPARTMENT
SPOKESMAN'S COMMENT THEREON (AFRICA FILE NO. 8
FOR THURSDAY, MAY 4, 1978). IN EARLIER ARTICLE
IN ISSUE NO. 14 RENOUVEAU HAD CLAIMED FRENCH
INTERVENTION IN CHAD COMPLICATED THE SITUATION.
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2. MAY 6 ARTICLE KEYED TO "QUESTIONS RAISED BY
AMERICAN DECLARATION CONCERNING FRENCH INTERVENTION
IN CHAD." CLAIMED AMERICAN STATEMENT SAID IN SUBSTANCE
THAT "FRENCH INTERVENTION IN CHAD WAS NOT COMPARABLE
TO CUBAN INTERVENTION IN AFRICA" BECAUSE "FRANCE
AS A FORMER COLONIAL POWER HAD OBLIGATIONS" AND

"ALSO HAD NUMEROUS FRENCH CITIZENS IN CHAD WHOSE SAFETY IT HAD TO ASSURE." ARTICLE WENT ON TO COMMENT THAT AMERICAN DECLARATION RAISED "EMBARRASSING QUESTION OF KNOWING AT WHAT MOMENT A FOREIGN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ANOTHER STATE BECAME LEGAL OR NOT." SUGGESTED ONE WAS TEMPTED TO SAY FOREIGN MILITARY INTERVENTION WAS "LEGAL WHEN REQUESTED AND ILLEGAL WHEN NOT REQUESTED." HOWEVER IN RECENT YEARS INTERNATIONAL MORALITY HAD CHANGED SO THAT POWERS WHICH DESIRED TO INTERVENE IN DEFENSE OF OUR INTERESTS COULD ARRANGE TO BE ASKED.

3. ARTICLE CONTINUED THAT WHEN "LEGAL GOVERNMENT OF ANGOLA ASKED CUBA TO HELP RESIST SOUTH AFRICAN AGGRESSION IT HAD BEEN ACCUSED OF "ALL EVILS" AND U.S. GOVERNMENT HAD REFUSED TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS WITH IT BECAUSE IT HAD CUBANS ON ITS SOIL." TODAY "FRENCH GOVERNMENT IS INTERVENING MILITARILY IN CHAD TO HELP THAT COUNTRY END A CIVIL WAR." CHAD "HAD NOT BEEN ATTACKED BY A FOREIGN POWER." YET THIS INTERVENTION WAS NORMAL "IF ONE WERE TO BELIEVE THE AMERICAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE." "OF COURSE FRANCE IS AN ALLY OF THE UNITED STATES. CUBA UP TO THE PRESENT IS ITS ENEMY." SUGGESTED THAT UNITED STATES IF IT HAD NOT CONCERTED ACTION WITH FRENCH HAD AT LEAST HAD ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE. CONFIDENTIAL

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CONCLUDED THAT THERE WERE "GOOD" AND "BAD" MILITARY INTERVENTIONS DEPENDING ON ONE'S POINT OF VIEW.

4. ARTICLE WENT ON TO STATE THAT IF IT WERE ACCEPTED THAT EX-COLONIAL POWERS HAD RIGHT TO INTERVENE IN FORMER COLONIES THEN OTHER POWERS WHICH HAD NOT PARTICIPATED IN COLONIAL PARTITION OF AFRICA COULD CLAIM RIGHT TO INTERVENE ON "MORE NOBLE PRINCIPLES" SUCH AS "INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY" OR "ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLE." FURTHER SUGGESTED THAT SUDDEN WILLINGNESS OF FRANCE TO INTERVENE A LITTLE EVERYWHERE WAS BASED ON AN APPETITE FOR CHAD'S MINERAL OR PETROLEUM DEPOSITS RATHER THAN ON MORAL PRINCIPLES. REITERATED EARLIER COMMENT (ISSUE NO. 14) THAT FRENCH INTERVENTION IN CHAD WAS COMPLICATING SITUATION THERE.

5. FRENCH AMBASSADOR TOLD ME MAY 9 THAT HE HAD INFORMALLY PROTESTED TO LE RENOUVEAU EDITOR THAT FRANCE, BOUND BY ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS WITH CHAD, HAD RESPONDED TO REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE BY MALLOUM WHOSE GOVERNMENT WAS ALSO RECOGNIZED BY RURUNDI. HE CHARACTERIZED ARTICLE AS IN HIS

"PERSONAL OPINION" "AN UNFRIENDLY ACT" AND ASKED THAT LE RENOUVEAU PRINT HIS REBUTTAL. HE TOLD ME THAT IF LE RENOUVEAU DID NOT HE WOULD TAKE MATTER UP WITH FOREIGN MPKIATER MUGANGA WHO HAD AGREED WITH HIM IN AN EARLIER CONVERSATION THAT MALLOUM HAD THE RIGHT TO REQUEST HELP FROM ANY SOURCE.

6. COMMENT: I SHALL BE SURPRISED IF THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR GETS ANY REAL SATISFACTION FROM LE RENOUVEAU. I THINK WE SHOULD CONSIDER THE CRITICISM OF THE DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT AS "DE MINIMIS" AND IGNORE IT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, PROPAGANDA, COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BUJUMB00485
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780200-0171
Format: TEL
From: BUJUMBURA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780575/aaaacyi.tel
Line Count: 128
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1af4b0a1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2740418
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LE RENOUVEAU CRITICIZES FRENCH ACTION IN CHAD AND US COMMENT THEREON SUMMARY: BURUNDI PRESS AGENCY DAILY NEWSPAPER
TAGS: PEPR, PROP, MOPS, BY, FR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1af4b0a1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014